

Shipwrecks, Islands, Magic, and Marvel:

Renaissance Responses to the New World Project

News of Columbus's arrival in the West Indies engendered a substantial and almost immediate cultural response in Renaissance Europe. In terms of literature, the cataclysmic impact of contact with America is evident not only in the large number of "Columbus epics" produced in the 16th and 17th centuries, but also in the works of writers such as Rabelais, Shakespeare, Ariosto, Cervantes and Tasso.

Although the "New World" is not the explicit focus of *The Tempest* or *Orlando Furioso*, for example, it is nonetheless discernible in the figure of the island, an untouched paradise in which magic and marvels abound. At the same time, the journey to this garden of delights, fraught as it is with peril (most often shipwrecks), is evocative of the journey to what Columbus called an "other world" where the "old world" is given the opportunity to start over and heal the wounds of Eden.

While it is not my intention here to spend much time in the depths of the Middle Ages, it is important for us to consider the cultural context into which we can insert the so-called New World discovery. And while this overview is by necessity rather general, I believe it will give us some sense of why and how Renaissance writers responded as they did to the discovery of this "new world."

To this end, it is crucial to underline the enormous spiritual and eschatological significance that attached to the so called "East" in the Middle Ages.¹ For Medieval Christians, the journey to the East, that is, to the East that lay beyond Jerusalem, was at once the unknown, the exotic and the forbidden. It is possible to identify the Christian origins of this in the Book of Genesis where Eden is located in the East, between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers.

SLIDE TWO

Although the book of Genesis makes it clear that mankind is prohibited from entering Eden, throughout the Old Testament, Eden continued to occupy the imagination of the Chosen people.ⁱⁱ In the Book of Ezekiel Eden, for example, is used as the antithesis of the slavery of sin. The return to the Edenic state is thus linked to liberation from this this slavery. The fascination continued throughout the crusades as European encountered the edges of the east and stories of the riches and exotica that might be found there enjoyed enormous popularity.

SLIDE THREE

The legend of Prester John, a combination of mystic, magus, king and priest of the mysterious east, for example, was fueled by the circulation of letter which spoke of the wonders of a vast kingdom in the east. The letter includes long lists of miraculous flora and fauns, precious stones and a variety of marvelous beings including “gryphons, wild men, men with horns, satyrs, and women of the same race, pigmies, cenofali, giants forty cubits in height, one-eyed men, cyclopes,” The letter also notes, “In our country there is abundance of milk and honey,”ⁱⁱⁱ

In the early fourteenth century Dante Alighieri was similarly concerned with locating Earthly Paradise. In the *Divine Comedy*, Dante places it atop Mount Purgatory, antipodal to Jerusalem and uses figural imagery to link the return to Eden to the end times described in the Book of Revelation. Although Dante’s pilgrim is allowed to enter, Dante the poet makes it clear that this is an exception willed by God. The inability of ordinary souls to penetrate the barriers to Eden is underlined in canto 26 of the *Inferno* where the pilgrim encounters Homer’s hero Ulysses. Here Dante reveals that Ulysses made one last voyage, one not described in the *Odyssey*, in which he sought “terra nova” by sailing west. Ulysses comes in sight of what Dante

Mount Purgatory but instead of being admitted to Earthly paradise is caught up in a tempest, shipwrecked and drowned. Dante's Ulysses episode is particularly important because it indicates that Dante the poet clearly had the possibility of **Terra nova** in mind. Moreover, Dante the poet also entertained the possibility of an Earthly Paradise also populated with people – the first people – new people, perhaps the **nova gente** to whom Dante later refers in *Paradiso* 33. To a certain extent as well, Dante's location of Earthly paradise presents his readers with the proposition that Earthly paradise was locatable and perhaps, and this is where Dante must exercise some restraint – it could be reached by boat by sailing west. Ulysses's journey in many ways then is a journey of revelation for it points Dante's readers towards something they had not seen before.

It bears mentioning that Dante is writing his *Divine Comedy* just as Marco Polo's account of his own journey to the east is being disseminated throughout Europe. Marco Polo's "chronicle" is, as you probably know, a compendium of fantastical tales not unlike those in the letter of Prester John that speak to the marvels and precious rarities of the east. In the same period, the re-discovery of the Canarias Islands off the west coast of Africa piqued European interest in the world west of the Pillars of Hercules.^{iv}

SLIDE 4 PILLARS OF HERCULES

But before we make the last giant leap beyond the Canaries and into the Caribbean, we should also note that while European Christianity was preoccupied with the East, irrespective of the direction in which one traveled to get there, we must recall that as late as the fifteenth century Europe remained equally preoccupied with end times, which as we have seen are not completely distinguishable from the concern about the location of Eden. Throughout late medieval Europe prophecies of a new age of a last world Emperor circulated widely and, given the socio-cultural

climate of the last stages of the *Reconquista* it is not surprising that the Spanish in particular were expecting cataclysmic change.^v

And now on to Columbus... Perhaps he was motivated by Dante's voyage, I think specifically of the 1481 illustrated edition that was circulating in Spain. Perhaps he was guided by the 1436 Bianco map. (Flint 19) in which Paradise and its rivers remain high in the Far East, raised up somewhat, on a peninsula on a conical base. Perhaps he was, in fact as he claimed called by God to be an agent of the Apocalypse. One suspects that Christopher Columbus's motivation was an amalgam of all of these. Whatever the case, in late 1492 Columbus sailed west, stopping off first in the Canaries and then on to the Caribbean where he made landfall. One of his ships was lost to a tempest and a shipwreck but Columbus, like Aeneas, like St. Paul and in contrast to Dante's Ulysses, survives and finds himself in a place of almost indescribable beauty populated by native peoples whose innocence and nudity, Columbus likens to that associated with children. He uses garden imagery to describe these islands and for a time he tried to locate his arrival in terms of the world he knows. Eventually however, Columbus during his third voyage concluded that he had arrived in an "other world" in which Earthly Paradise was surely located.^{vi}

News of his discovery was first circulated via a series of letters and followed by a flurry of other expeditions by a variety of explorers, from Cabral to Hojeda and these voyages in turn, gave way to an age of exploration on the part of Renaissance writers who engage in a colossal act of world making and world writing as they chronicle this revelation and try to make sense of what it means. Relying on a series of paradigms culled from the scriptural and millennial traditions, the writers who engaged with the deluge of letters and ships' logs returning from the

west in turn shape the new world as surely as did the cartographers who suddenly find themselves busier than they have been in centuries.

It is impossible in a talk of this length to enumerate the numerous sources with which writers and indeed painters of the renaissance were confronted, but today I will highlight a few that illustrate to extent which the new world project informs the Renaissance and the extent to which further inquiry into this is surely warranted.

The letters of Pedro Vas de Caminha who sailed with Pedro Alvares de Cabral to Brazil in 1500 provide us many details that echo Columbus's accounts of the Caribbean and the edges of South America. But he also introduces one of the major tensions that will inform the works of Ariosto and Tasso. In Caminha's account of the innocent and shameless natives of this new world, there is certainly a sense that mankind is being allowed a glimpse into the past and given the opportunity to start over. But there are risks here. In colonizing, we run the risk of making the same mistakes all over again and at the same time we run the risk ironically of being seduced by the lack of rules and ritual that define life in this new world.^{vii}

Amerigo Vespucci expresses similar wonder. In his series of letters to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de Medici and Piero Soderini, Vespucci, a former provisioner to sailors such as Columbus presents himself also as an Adam figure in the garden of Eden who was given by God the power to name the animals. Unabashedly Vespucci gives his name to the north American continent, describing a voyage he almost certainly did not make, and describing a coast he very likely did not see. At the same time, he declares this to be a new world, removing it from the realm of the mystical despite his inclusion of many fantastical elements. Vespucci's place is very real and very reachable. Vespucci's letters are sensationalist at best and emphasize the sensuality of this new land. Like so many of the chroniclers, he emphasizes the nudity and

innocence of these native people and like so many of the chroniclers he remarks upon their sexual freedom.^{viii}

SLIDE FIVE Bosch

Contemporaneous with these accounts we find Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. The date of this masterpiece is uncertain but the consensus among 20th-century art historians placed the work in 1503–1504 or even later. Internal evidence, specifically the depiction of a pineapple (a "New World" fruit), suggests that the painting itself postdates Columbus' voyages to the Americas, between 1492 and 1504. Whether Bosch was inspired by the new world discoveries or found that they conveniently complimented his vision of Eden is unclear, but we see that many of the elements in the new world chronicles exist harmoniously alongside artistic imagining of Earthly Paradise.

In Peter Martyr's *Decades of the New World* published in 1511 (*De orbe novo*) warns that this paradise is also fraught with peril and thus paints the new world explorers as epic heroes. The difficult sea voyage is the most obvious and immediate of these dangers. While tempests and shipwrecks will continue to inform the stories of the new world, Martyr's almost obsessive preoccupation with the threat of cannibalism suggests something more than sensationalism. Increasingly the concern for the cannibals just around the corner, or on another island, speaks to an almost primal fear of being hunted and consumed.^{ix}

The fear of the savage waiting in the shadows to consume the otherwise brave colonist or colonizer suggest that the sense of wonder and awe at the innocence of the native, was tempered somewhat by the knowledge of post-lapsarian man, of the snake in the grass as it were, that there might be trouble in paradise.^x

SLIDE SIX Cannibals.

There is another concern somewhat related to the fear of what lies hidden in the woods. The Caminha letters do not speak to this directly but his wonder and his constant attention to the importation of the old world alerts the reader to the artifice and miming that is at the core of the colonial project. For the Europeans, the transformation of paradise very quickly becomes an exercise in replicating the old world rather than a leap backwards ... or forwards into a new possibility. This tension becomes even greater in *De Orbe novo* as Martyr narrates the mimetic actions of the natives whom Columbus encounters but wonders if they have in fact been converted.^{xi} “the Spaniards knelt according to Christian custom, and their example was immediately followed by the natives. The latter likewise adored the Cross as they saw the Christians doing.”

This concern as to the genuineness or fictive imitative nature, that is, the worry that not all is as it seems is at play in the episode on Alcina’s island in Ludovico Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso*. (1516- 1521) In Canto 6 the hero Ruggiero is seduced by the island and by Alcina herself. The island, is described as a place of untold pleasures.^{xii} The *Orlando* is of course set in the late eighth century, but the age of discovery is anticipated in Canto 15: “But in the course of circling years I view, From farthest lands which catch the western ray, New Argonauts put forth, and Tiphys new Opening, till now an undiscovered way.”

Alcina’s island of marvels then is one of the islands not yet discovered in the 700’s but like the new lands in *de orbe novo* this locus amoenus is one of potential danger. As Alcina, the temptress’s magic is uncovered she is revealed as a hag, and the island of earthly delights is similarly unmasked.

SLIDE SEVEN Cranach

Let us look now at Lukas Cranach's 1546 painting of the fountain of youth. Here we see the fountain of youth exhibits all of the properties that we have seen in the new world chronicles, but most notably it, like the gardens of medieval and Renaissance traditions is a walled in space – an island in its *isolazione*. Similarly, this small island in the wilderness is a protected space. The fountain spouting water from the spring into the pool bears the statues of Venus and Cupid - evidence that this is at the same time a fountain of erotic love as well as youth, also significant in the island paradise, where free love abounds, and our chroniclers tell us the natives live to a hundred and fifty years old.

The painting reflects a yearning evident in the European response to the islands of the Caribbean, as the return to Eden signaled a yearning for immortality and eternal youth. The notion of the cleansing and transformative power of water is common in many religious traditions. But the painting also requires that the bathers return to their old world once restored. As the restored go from old age to youth, they indeed put their regular clothing back on. The island cannot be more than a temporary excursion for to stay would be to remain in a state of childhood forever and would deny the European Christian belief in eventual end of time.^{xiii}

Rabelais's 1534 tale of Gargantua and Pantraguuel takes a somewhat different approach to these growing suspicions and tension in the age of encounters. Book 4 is at once a parody of the many emerging treatments of the new world project but it is also a reflection of Rabelais' recognition of the carnivalesque depiction of the islands and the European encounters with the other. The temptation to go "native" that so terrifies the European and yet at the same time remains an avatar of seduction is the essence of the carnivalesque identified by Bakhtin in his later dissection of Gargantua. Rabelais is acutely aware of the isolated nature of the islands to which his voyagers travel, and they serve as excursions along the way of a larger journey of life.

The tempest in Book 4 might be interpreted as an apt metaphor for two worlds colliding, as Dante's Ulysses, and then countless others suffer tempests and shipwrecks, some surviving, and others not as their vessels, their protective walls are shattered by the elements. Pantagruel survives the shipwreck and continues his pilgrimage to the Oracle of the Holy Bottle, Bacbuc.^{xiv} Tasso's 16th century epic *Gerusalemme Liberata*^{xv} similarly treats the island as an excursion from the progress of the hero, so much so that the episode that takes place in the Canaries is excised from the second edition.

Like *Orlando Furioso*, the poem is set in a much earlier era but its parallels with the contemporary situation make it an apt vehicle for commentary on the present. And as in the *Orlando Furioso*, it retro-prophesies the eventual revelation of a hidden land by Columbus, "un uomo de la Liguria,"^{xvi} who will go where Ulysses, Dante's Ulysses that is, could not go." The new world for Tasso, therefore, is one that is linked to the return to paradise, the conquest of Jerusalem and its transformation into the New Jerusalem. Here once again, we have a knight, Rinaldo, bewitched by a temptress who lives on an island - Armida. When Rinaldo is ultimately persuaded to return to the fight, Armida is heartbroken and raises an army to fight against the Christians. She loses the war but when she attempts to kill herself, Rinaldo, finds her in time converts her to Christianity.^{xvii} Rinaldo's project of conversion and is directly contrasted with Goffredo's project of elimination as Goffredo fights against the natives in an attempt to eradicate them. Thus, the island in *Gerusalemme Liberata*, stands as an example of where the marvels and magic of the paradisaical new world, might be interpreted as a cautionary tale, reflecting the mistrust that has developed between the colonizers and the colonized. The trouble in Paradise anticipated by the earliest chroniclers has now been realized.

The tempest that I have posited functions as a metaphor for the disruption caused when two worlds collide, when two fronts abut, is at the heart of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Set on a remote island, the play embodies multiple aspects of this colonial tension. Magic, isolation, and the danger of being consumed, materialize in the characters of Caliban and Prospero. Prospero's magic and his quest to restore the old order, through manipulation and artifice, have much in common with Rabelais's treatment of the new world project. Commonalities between Shakespeare's work and Erasmus's *Naufragium of Erasmus* and Peter Martyr's *De orbe novo*, confirm the extent to which the tempest might be seen in Bakhtinian terms. The masque that occurs in Act 4 is a further indication of the extent to which the new world writing project utilized the carnivalesque to deal with the unspeakable. The fine line between seduction and coercion, the possibility of violence and anxiety about cannibalism it appears, lurked in the souls of those who perceived the new world project as a mirror of the old.

The Renaissance response to the Age of Encounters is, therefore, both forward and backward looking. Informed by a cultural nostalgia for a prelapsarian past, many Renaissance works suggest that this brave new world is intimately linked to an even older world. Concomitantly, this return to the past not only permits the "old man" to experience the cradle of mankind in its virgin state but also urges him to become a new creature. Yet a tension arises in this challenge to the progress of time, for the European mind cannot be cleansed of the memory of temptation, the clock cannot be turned back and the island, it turns out is perhaps only "such stuff as dreams are made on." Shakespeare's work, in the context of the growing field of utopian writing, suggests that, like Utopia, Paradise, it turns out might be nowhere at all.^{xviii}

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ⁱ Accordingly, in the Judeo-Christian tradition Paradise was indeed a place on earth. Two mid-twelfth century copies of the *Liber Floridus* of Lambert of St. Omer, for example, include Earthly Paradise.ⁱ These copies include a *mappa mundi* with, “on the front, the lands of Shem, Ham and Japhet and the great southern continent (the two landmasses being separated by a torrid stream of ocean), and at the back (indicated by circles on the edge of the inhabited world) two echoing earth-islands. One of these islands is described as Paradise, and appears meant to be placed diametrically opposite the Australian continent depicted on the front.” (Flint 31)ⁱ Another of the standard medieval representations of the world the so-called “T-O” maps quite regularly depict Earthly Paradise, placing it, in accordance with *Genesis* 2:8, above Jerusalem, with the four rivers of Paradise pouring out of it (*Genesis* 2:10-14) and, in accordance, with *Genesis* 3:24 a fiery barrier surrounding it. (Flint 10)

ⁱⁱ In the Book of Ezekiel Eden, for example, is used as the antithesis of the slavery of sin. Salvation from this slavery is thus linked with the return to the Edenic state. This link is further enforced in the New Testament as the four gospels and the subsequent books and letters that chronicle man’s liberation from sin through the death, descent and resurrection of Christ. Scripturally the culmination of this liberation is expressed in the Book of Revelation where John of Patmos’s apocalyptic vision links the coming of the New Jerusalem with the revelation Tree of Life associating the end of the world with the advent of the New Jerusalem and the Return to Paradise. (*Rev.* 22)

I would suggest that the fascination with the East is likely also enhanced by Gospel story of the voyage of the magi that led to the “epiphany” that is the “discovery” of the Christ-child. These sages who have foreseen the birth of a redeemer in the stars come from the east, following a star that brings them westward to Jerusalem and eventually to Bethlehem. Thus the gospels provided Christians with a sacred paradigm of revelation, in the journey from the east to the west guided by a signal in the heavens. At the same time they trace a trajectory for the revelation of redemption from the sins of Adam that occasioned man’s expulsion from Eden.

ⁱⁱⁱ Perhaps just as significant for my purposes today is the following description of this land of milk and honey: “and from there an excellent spring flows; and the water has every kind of taste, and the taste changes each hour, day and night. And from there, not further than three days’ journey from Paradise, from which Adam was driven out. Whoever drinks of the water of that spring during his fast, no disease will come upon him from that day forth, and he will ever be thirty years of age.”

^{iv} Moreover, while, as Jane Tylus points out, the discovery of these “fortunate Islands” provided Boccaccio and Petrarch with the “opportunity to muse on the relative virtues of civilization and savagery” it also constituted one the “first European experiments in the twin processes of colonization and conversion.” (Tylus 101)

^v But we ought not to forget that in Florence as well the enigmatic fiery preacher Girolamo Savonarola was preaching the end of the world and focused quite frequently on the deluge. Savonarola compared the invasion of French forces in to Italy to the waters of a great flood: “Behold,” he cried from the pulpit on Sept 21, 1494.

^{vi} Moreover, Columbus concluded, during his third voyage, that the earth was very much like that imagined by Dante. He writes that after having discovered the mouth of the Orinoco river, he inferred from his observations that the earth “has the shape of a pear, which is all very round, except at the stem, where it is very prominent, or that it is as if one had a very round ball, and one part of it was placed something like a woman’s nipple [una teta de mujer]”^{vi} [SLIDE 17] A few miles inland Columbus expected to arrive at the bulge of this “pear-shaped” earth on top of which was to be a promontory, on which he expects the legendary Earthly Paradise is located. (left on May 30, 1498 for San Lucar.)

^{vii} Indeed the Caminha letters express a great wonder at the lack of order in the lives of the natives that results not in chaos but in harmony. He insists on noting the extent to which they are one with nature.:

immediately became more cautious and would not return again to this side of it. The other two whom the captain had on the ships, and to whom he gave what has already been mentioned, did not appear again, from which I infer that they are bestial people and of very little knowledge; and for this reason they are so timid. Yet withal they are well cared for and very clean, and in this it seems to me that they are rather like birds or wild animals, to which the air gives better feathers and better hair than to tame ones. And their bodies are so clean and so fat and so beautiful that they could not be more so; and this causes me to presume that they have no houses or dwellings in which to gather, and the air in which they are brought up makes them so. Nor indeed have we up to this time seen any houses or anything which looks like them. The captain

The necessity however of taming these wild birds is ever present and Caminha once again remarks with wonder at their ability to imitate the sacred rituals of Christianity.

their ~~houses~~ ^{is so large and so thick} and of such abundant foliage that one cannot describe it. In it there are many palms, from which we gathered many good sprouts. When we disembarked, the captain said that it would be well to go directly to the cross, which was leaning against a tree near the river, to be set up the next day, which was Friday, and that we should all kneel down and kiss it so that they might see the respect which we had for it. And thus we did. And we motioned to those ten or twelve who were there that they should do the same, and at once they all went to kiss it. They seem to me people of such innocence that, if one could understand them and they us, they would soon be Christians, because they do not have or understand any belief, as it appears. And therefore, if the convicts who are to remain here will learn their language well and understand them, I do not doubt that they will become Christians in a year.

^{viii} Significantly this new land, in Vespucci's letters we hear a story of enormous restorative powers, that echoes the letter of Prester John. Vespucci says: "In their illnesses they use various kinds of medicines, so different from ours that we marveled how anyone escaped. I often saw a patient ill with fever, when the disease was at its height, bathed with quantities of cold water from head to foot. Then they made a great fire all round, making him turn backwards and forwards for two hours until he was tired, and he was then left to sleep. Many were cured."

^{ix} "Abibaiba, his subjects, and his sons gave the same information concerning the gold mines and the Caribs who live upon human flesh, as I have mentioned, as did those at Comogra. They ascended the river another thirty miles and came to the huts of some cannibals but found them empty, for the savages, alarmed by the approach of the Spaniards, had taken refuge in the mountains, carrying everything they possessed on their backs.

And elsewhere: "Most ferocious are those new anthropophagi, who live on human flesh, Caribs or cannibals as they are called. These cunning man-hunters think of nothing else than this occupation, and all the time not given to cultivating the fields they employ in wars and man-hunts. Licking their lips in anticipation of their desired prey, these men lie in wait for our compatriots, as the latter would for wild boar or deer they sought to trap. If they feel themselves unequal to a battle, they retreat and disappear with the speed of the wind. If an encounter takes place on the water, men and women swim with as great a facility as though they lived in that element and found their sustenance under the waves.

^x Colin M. MacLachlan, notes the "powerful evocation of the New World as a kind of pre-lapsarian Eden that marks the opening of Book 10 ("there were many new lands found, and nations which lived naked and after the law of nature," but notes also the recognition by Martyr that this new land is flawed by the presence of "savage man," who is characterized by that most potent and colonially defining of human horrors, cannibalism.

^{xi} "When they landed from their ships they were received with great honour by these kings and by all the natives, making every demonstration of homage of which they were capable. At sunset, the hour of the Angelus, the Spaniards knelt according to Christian custom, and their example was immediately followed by the natives. The latter likewise adored the Cross as they saw the Christians doing."

^{xii} "A more delightful place, ... Ruggiero had not found: 'Mid cultivated plain, delicious hill, Moist meadow, shady bank, and crystal rill. Small thickets, with the scented laurel gay, Cedar, and orange, full of fruit and flower, Myrtle and palm, with interwoven spray, Pleached in mixed modes, all lovely, form a bower; And, breaking with their shade the scorching ray, Make a cool shelter from the noontide hour. And nightingales among those branches wing Their flight, and safely amorous descants sing. Amid red roses and white lilies there, ... Secure the cony haunts, and timid hare, And stag, with branching forehead broad and high.

These, fearless of the hunter's dart or snare, Feed at their ease, or ruminating lie; While, swarming in those wilds, from tuft or steep Dun deer or nimble goat, disporting, leap.

^{xiii} We note that the return to the periphery includes items not found in the new Eden; a dining table set for an orderly dinner, carts and horses, beasts of burden and human labor. In fact some of the early letters comment on how easily the native women give birth and return to their previous shape without stretch marks or wrinkling.

^{xiv} "IV. In the month of June, on Vesta's holiday ... Pantagruel took his leave of the good Gargantua, his royal father. The old gentleman, according to the laudable custom of the primitive Christians, devoutly prayed for the happy voyage of his son and his whole company. The number of ships were such as I described in the third book, convoyed by a like number of triremes, men of war, galleons, and feluccas, well-rigged, caulked, and stored with a good quantity of Pantagruelion."

Pantagruel's journey is a journey to a new world – in which he will be able in isolation to consider everything from a different perspective from the heterogeneity of the beings he encounters to the slavish worship of the papal decretals with which he is confronted. Her is Rabelais's world the fantastic, like a mask is one that both conceals and reveals and so his journey to the oracle itself becomes a revelation.

^{xv} Tasso began work on the poem in the mid-1560 and completed it in April, 1575.

^{xvi} "Un uom de la Liguria avrà ardimento / A l'incognito corso esporsi in prima:" 15:32:1-2; "Tu spiegherai, Colombo, a un novo polo / Lontane sì le fortunate atene / Ch' a pena seguirà con gli occhi il volo / La fama c'ha mille occhi e mille penne." 15:32:1-3

^{xvii} We must not forget that the suspicion of these newly converted "savages" should be viewed in the light of the post 1492 forced conversion of the Jews and Muslims in Spain and in the context of the Counterreformation so it should not surprise is that the very people whom the Europeans are seeking to convert might be viewed as perhaps not converting being actually converted. In Rabelais's Gargantua, he takes the opportunity to address this issue in the context of this episode in Book IV where the author discusses the "incurable" will under duress... since cannot help things that Rabelais's argument might easily be extended to other acts made under duress,...

^{xviii} The tempest was written in the wake of Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlow's 1584 expedition to explore the eastern shore of the New World. On the basis of Barlow's report extolling the virtues of the land Sir Walter Raleigh dubbed it "Virginia." In Barlow's report he describes a land of "sweet smells," overflowing with grapes and an "incredible abundance" of animals, "the best in all the world." And goes on to describe this Virginia in language that might as well have been taken out of one of Vespucci's letters and concludes that "The earth bringeth forth all things in abundance as in the first creation, without toil or labour